

Capsule Summary
SM-453
Christmas Hill
Drayden vicinity
Private

Circa 1870

Christmas Hill, formerly known as Turkey Knoll, is significant as a fairly well-preserved example of a center hall, single-pile plan, frame farm house. While this site has been occupied by a dwelling since the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the architectural features of the current structure suggest a later building date. It may be that earlier framing exists underneath replacement exterior fabric.

In 1829, John Bean, son of Alexander Bean, died possessed of 150 acres of "Frog's Marsh" and "Talors Lot." In 1840, George Cox purchased the Bean property for \$815. At that time, the land was known as "Taylors Lot a part of frog's Marsh" and was improved with "a comfortable one-story dwelling House with two rooms on the lower floor with a chimney at each end, a kitchen, meathouse, and dairy..." It remains unclear whether any of this early structure has survived and been incorporated into the present two-story building.

George H. Cox died intestate around 1877. At the time of his death, the land was divided between 80 acres of farmland and 100 acres of woodland. In addition to the dwelling, a kitchen, barn, stable, corn house, granary, meathouse and dairy stood on the property. In 1878, Cox's heirs sold the property to Lewis F. Combs. It remained in the Combs family as a working farm until 1925. In 1925, Robert and Laura Griggs purchased the property. Dr. Griggs, a botanist from Washington, D.C., planted a number of unusual species of plants around the house and grounds at Christmas Hill. Dr. Marion Hopkins purchased the property in 1948. Hopkins rebuilt the house twice, raising the roof on some sections and adding porches to the structure. It was during Hopkins' ownership that the name of the house was changed from "Turkey Knoll" to "Christmas Hill."

SM-453, Christmas Hill
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period: Agricultural/Industrial Transition, 1815-1870.
Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870 - 1930.

Historic Period Theme: Architecture

Resource Type

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function and Use: Residence

Known Design Source: None

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. **SM 453**

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Taylor's Lot; Turkey Knoll

and/or common Christmas Hill (pref.)

2. Location

street & number Frogs Marsh Road

 not for publication

city, town Drayden

X vicinity of

congressional district

5

state Maryland

county St. Mary's

3. Classification

Category

 district

X building(s)

 structure

 site

 object

Ownership

 public

X private

 both

Public Acquisition

 in process

 being considered

X not applicable

Status

X occupied

 unoccupied

 work in progress

Accessible

X yes: restricted

 yes: unrestricted

 no

Present Use

 agriculture

 commercial

 educational

 entertainment

 government

 industrial

 military

 museum

 park

X private residence

 religious

 scientific

 transportation

 other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name J. Laurence Millison

street & number 81 Millison Lane

telephone no.: (301) 863 9300

city, town Lexington Park

state and zip code Maryland

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse

liber MRB 4

street & number

folio 267

city, town Leonardtown

state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date

 federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Survey No. **SM 453**

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Contributing Resource Count: 1

Christmas Hill is located at the end of an unpaved road on the north side of Frogs Marsh Road. Until recently, the house was surrounded by cultivated fields and woodland. The property west of the house is now being developed as a subdivision. The St. Mary's River is located north and east of the house. Boxwood and other decorative plantings surround the house. Christmas Hill faces south with the principal gable oriented on an east/west axis.

Built around 1870 or possibly earlier, Christmas Hill is a two-story, five-bay structure with a center hall/single pile plan. Over the years, additions have been constructed on the north and west elevations. The house appears to be supported by a brick pier foundation, although it is not possible to see underneath the house. The exterior is sheathed with aluminum siding and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The south (main) elevation consists of a central door flanked by sidelights consisting of two lights over a single panel. The door is surmounted by a three-light transom. A corrugated metal awning shelters the entrance. The door is flanked on either side by two six-over-six sash windows with narrow surrounds and louvered shutters. The second floor is pierced by five of these windows. An enclosed shed roof porch is located on the west side of the house. The porch is pierced by one six-over-one sash window with louvered shutters. A small shed roof addition extends from the porch enclosure and serves as the furnace room. An interior brick stack projects from the roof of the small shed addition.

The west elevation of the main block consists of the porch enclosure which extends across two bays of the first floor. This enclosure is pierced by two six-over-one sash windows with louvered shutters. The second floor of the main block gable end is pierced by two shuttered six-over-six sash windows with narrow surrounds. A two-story addition extends to the north of the main block. A porch supported by square posts wraps around the first floor of the addition from the west to the north elevation. The first floor of the addition is pierced by a multi-pane entrance door and one shuttered six-over-one sash window. The second floor is pierced by two shuttered six-over-six sash windows.

The north elevation consists of the addition's gable end as the two western most bays. The first floor of the addition is obscured by the wrap around porch. Behind the porch, the first floor is pierced by two shuttered six-over-one sash windows. The second floor is pierced by two shuttered six-over-six sash windows. An interior brick chimney pierces the roof slope. The first floor of the main block is pierced by two six-

8. Significance

Survey No. **SM 453**

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates Unknown Builder/Architect Unknown

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Christmas Hill, formerly known as Turkey Knoll, is significant as a fairly well-preserved example of a center hall, single-pile plan, frame farm house. While this site has been occupied by a dwelling since the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the architectural features of the current structure suggest a later building date. It may be that earlier framing exists underneath replacement exterior fabric.

In 1829, John Bean, son of Alexander Bean, died possessed of 150 acres of "Frog's Marsh" and "Talors Lot." In 1837, the court appointed a commission to equitably divide Bean's estate between his six heirs. In 1840, George Cox purchased the Bean property for \$815. At that time, the land was known as "Taylors Lot a part of frog's Marsh" and improved with "a comfortable one-story dwelling House with two rooms on the lower floor with a chimney at each end, a kitchen, meathouse, and dairy..." It remains unclear whether any of this early structure has survived and been incorporated into the present two-story building. The underside of the house was not accessible.

George H. Cox died intestate around 1877. The condition of his property upon his death is described in a real estate inventory which notes, "The land is divided in four fields, the whole amounting to 80 acres and about 100 acres in wood. The dwelling house is in fair condition, yard and garden, enclosed with paling. The kitchen very much out of repair, there is one barn and stable attached. One corn house and granary attached. The whole in bad condition. One meat house and dairy. There is a small orchard of 50 young trees under good enclosure." (JTMR 1/31)

In 1878, Cox's heirs sold the property to Lewis F. Combs. It remained in the Combs family until 1925. Christine Echols, who visited the house as a child during the Combs ownership, remembers that the Combs family hosted a big party in the house every year. She recalls the property as a working farm where chickens, ducks and cattle were raised. At that time, outbuildings on the parcel included a meathouse, cattle barn, and tobacco barn.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM 453

Echols, Christine, Telephone Interview, December 1994

Springer, Jack, Telephone Interview, December 1994

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 20 AcresQuadrangle name St. Mary's CityQuadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting NorthingB

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Zone Easting NorthingC

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D

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Acreage includes house and surrounding open space which extends to the St. Mary's River.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Hughes, Historic Sites Surveyororganization St. Mary's County Planning & Zoningdate December 1994street & number 328 Washington Streettelephone (301) 475 4662city or town Leonardtownstate Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
514-7600

SM-453, Christmas Hill
St. Mary's County
7.1 Description

over-six sash windows with louvered shutters. The second floor is pierced by two six-over-six sash windows and one two-over-two sash window.

The east elevation of the northern two-story addition is pierced by three six-over-one sash windows with louvered shutters on the first floor. The second floor is pierced by one six-over-six sash window and one two-over-two sash window with louvered shutters. The gable end of the main block is pierced by two six-over-six sash windows on both the first and second floors.

The interior of the main block consists of a center hall, single-pile plan. The open string stair is located in the hall and is fitted with turned balusters and a turned newell post. The sides of the hand rail are reeded. The string is finished with a bead on the outer edge. A vertical panel door with horizontal battens and a box lock opens to the closet located underneath the stair. The door is hung with machine made metal hinges and appears to be composed of reciprocal sawn lumber. The underside of the staircase is composed of circular sawn lumber and mature machine cut nails.

A four-panel door opens from the hall to the east parlor. The firebox located against the east wall is flanked by free-standing, slender columns surmounted by a plain frieze and a mantel shelf. A second four-panel door opens from the hall into a small bathroom located north of the east parlor. A four-panel door with a box lock also opens from the hall into the west parlor. Now used as a dining room, a mantel is located against the west wall here. The mantel consists of reeded pilasters mounted on plain plinth blocks and surmounted by a shelf. The interior chimney stack, which projects about two feet into the room, is flanked on either side by narrow built-in closets. A pair of fifteen-light doors open between the west dining room and the first floor of the northern two-story addition. This addition is also accessible by means of a fifteen-light door located at the north end of the stair hall.

The second floor of the main block is composed of two bedrooms and a bathroom. The east bedroom is fitted with what appears to be a late Federal period mantel, probably salvaged from an earlier structure, located against the east wall. The firebox is framed by a beaded surround and flanked by pilasters. The tri-partite frieze consists of three projecting blocks decorated with gouged reeding alternating with two plain, recessed panels. The second floor of the two-story addition serves as the third bedroom.

Two outbuildings are located on the property. The one located closest to the house is a small storage building sheathed with vinyl siding and roofed with asphalt shingles. A gable-roofed tobacco barn is located further from the house.

SM-453, Christmas Hill
St. Mary's County
8.5 Significance

In 1925, Robert and Laura Griggs purchased the property from the Combs heirs. Dr. Griggs was a botanist from Washington, D.C., and over the years, he planted a number of unusual species of plants around the house and grounds at Christmas Hill. Griggs sold the property to Marion and Laurel Hopkins in 1948. Dr. Hopkins is remembered as a chemist who worked for an oil company. According to Jack Springer, Hopkins rebuilt the house twice. He raised the roof on some sections of the building and added onto it. He also added the rear and side porches to the house. It was during Hopkins' ownership that the name of the house was changed from "Turkey Knoll" to "Christmas Hill."

SM-453, Christmas Hill
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

TO: J. Laurence Millison, a.k.a. Larry Millison
FROM: Virginia Hopkins Hanrahan, Byrd Hopkins, Victor C. Hopkins
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber MRB 4, folio 267.
DATE: January 24, 1978
NOTES: Transfer of 216.763 acres being "Part of Taylor's Lot," "No Man's Land," "Part of Frog's Marsh," "Taylor's Lot," now known as "Christmas Hill Farm."

TO: Virginia Hopkins Hanrahan, Byrd Hopkins, Victor C. Hopkins
FROM: Marion B. Hopkins, widower.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber DBK 181, folio 294.
DATE: September 8, 1972.
NOTES: Transfer of three parcels. Parcel Two is "Taylor's Lot" being 152 acres, and "Part of Frog's Marsh" being 20 acres.

TO: Marion B. and Laurel Bond Hopkins
FROM: Robert F. Griggs and Laura T. Griggs
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber CBG 22, folio 8.
DATE: August 4, 1948.
NOTES: Transfer of "Taylor's Lot" being 152 acres and "Part of Frog's Marsh" being 20 acres.

TO: Robert F. Griggs and Laura F. Griggs
FROM: Evelyn F. Spedden and Velma F. Goodrich
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber CBG 22, folio 7.
DATE: June 28, 1948.
NOTES: Transfer of 1/6 undivided interest in above mentioned property having been the interest of Frank Frazier, now deceased, which passed to his two only heirs.

TO: Robert F. Griggs and Laura T. Griggs
FROM: Catherine F. Norris and John H. Norris, Frank Frazier, widower, Mary O. Dent, widow, M. Jeannette Springer and Benjamin Springer, Herbert T. Combs and Rose M. Combs, Sarah E. Shepherd and Robert H. Shepherd.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JMM 3, folio 237.
DATE: September 9, 1925.
NOTES: Transfer of "Taylor's Lot" being 152 acres and "Part of Frog's Marsh" being 20 acres. This is the same property of which Sarah E. Combs died possessed around 1910. Sarah Combs died intestate leaving surviving her Martin E. Combs, who died intestate in 1917, and Catherine F., S. Susan (who married Frank Frazier), Mary O., Menick Jeannette, Herbert T., and Sarah E. Price: \$6000

TO: Sarah C. Combs
FROM: Edwin Fenhagan and Jane Elizabeth Fenhagan

SM-453, Christmas Hill
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 13, folio 177.

DATE: October 15, 1891.

NOTES: Transfer of "Taylor's Lot" being 152 acres and "Part of Frog's Marsh" being 20 acres, the same of which Lewis F. Combs died possessed and descended to Martin E. Combs subject to the widow's dower of Louwenda Combs, widow of Lewis. (Sarah Combs is the daughter of the Fenhagans.)

TO: Edwin Fenhagan

FROM: Martin E. Combs

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 12, folio 301.

DATE: September 19, 1890.

NOTES: Transfer of "Taylor's Lot" being 152 acres and "Part of Frog's Marsh" being 20 acres. Price: \$800

TO: Lewis F. Combs

FROM: James F. Cox and Charlotte Cox, Van Buren Foxwell and Sarah Foxwell, Richard M. McKay and Rose McKay, David Hammett and Henrietta Hammett, Richard B. Lomax, surviving husband of Eliza O. Lomax, being the heirs of George Cox.

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 3, folio 14.

DATE: January 2, 1878.

NOTES: Transfer of "Taylor's Lot" being 152 acres and "Part of Frog's Marsh" being 20 acres being the same owned by George Cox, now deceased. Price: \$1500.

TO: George H. Cox

FROM: John L. Milburn and Ann Milburn

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JTB 1, folio 474.

DATE: February 12, 1853.

NOTES: Transfer of part of Frog's Marsh. No acreage or metes and bounds given. Price: \$1150

TO: George Cox

FROM: Thomas Hebb, John H. Milburn, John H. Bean, and William H. Hebb, commissioners.

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JTB 1, folio 92.

DATE: November 5, 1851.

NOTES: John Bean of Alexander died in 1829 seized of "Frog's Marsh" and "Talors Lot" being 150 acres. Bean left six heirs including Sarah Cox, Stephen L. Bean, Ann Bean, Mary Bean, Thomas Bean, and James E. Bean. In 1837 the court appointed commissioners to oversee settlement of the estate. On August 22, 1840 George Cox purchased 150 acres of Taylors Lot and part of Frog's Marsh from the estate for \$815. Land Commission Record JH 3/461 describes the property he purchased as "This land has a comfortable one-story dwelling House with two rooms on the lower floor with a

SM-453, Christmas Hill

St. Mary's County

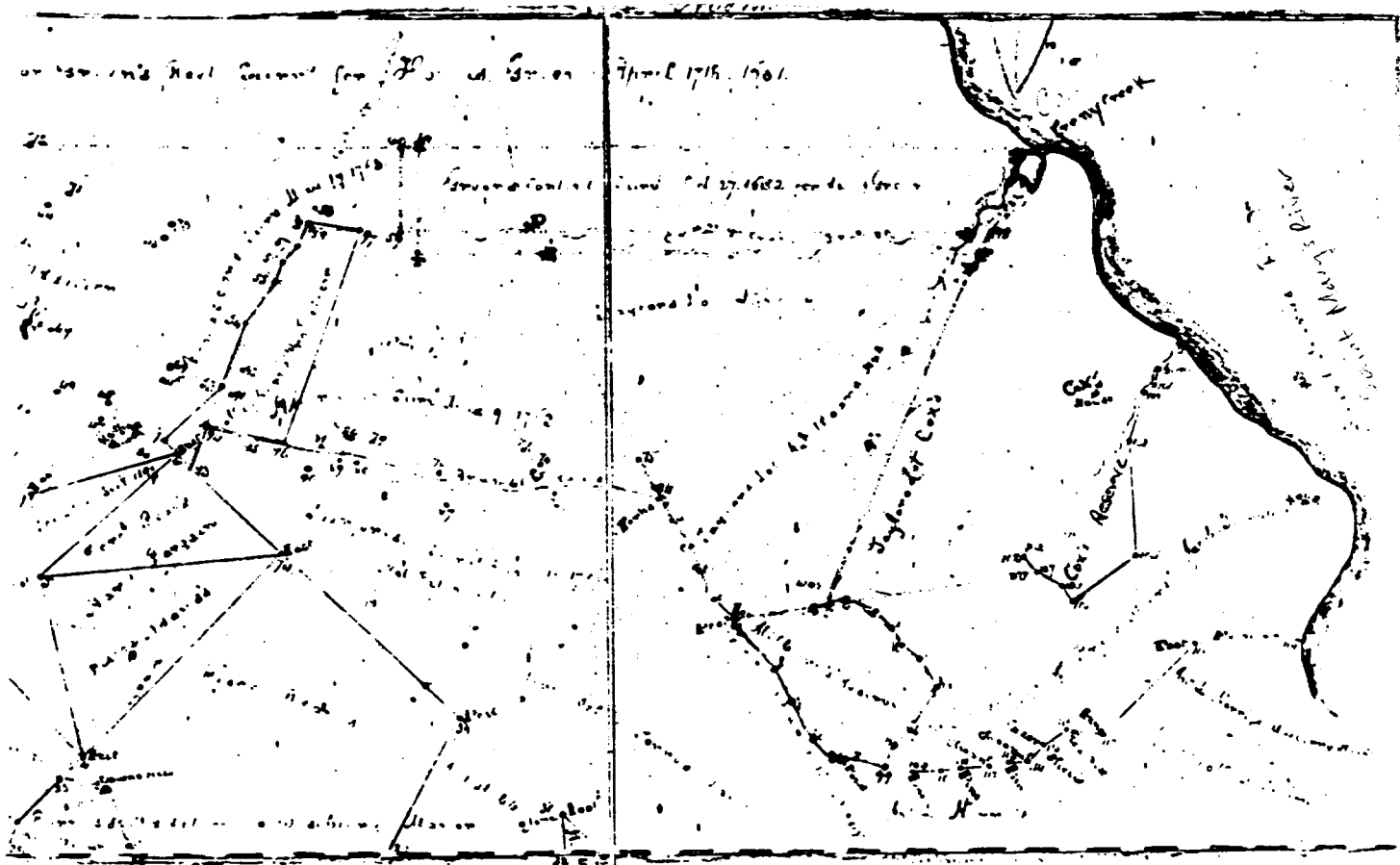
8.3 Significance

chimney at each end, a kitchen, meathouse, and dairy, etc. on it. This land is situated on St. Mary's River about four miles from Clifton Factory. It has plenty of wood and lumber on it for the use of the farm. This land is known by the name of Taylors Lot a part of frogs Marsh..."

SM-453, Christmas Hill
St. Mary's County
8.4 Significance

This plat shows the location of "Cox's House" as identified by Benjamin Tippet in his Surveyor Log Books. The Cox House site appears to be identical to the current location of Christmas Hill.

Source: Tippet, Benjamin. Surveyor Log Books: Vol. A 1836-1856; Vol. B. 1860-1873. Copy held at the St. Mary's County Courthouse.



25

DMA 5760 III NW-SERIES



SM-453

Christmas Hill

St Mary's County, MD

E. Hughes

11/94

MD CHPO

S Elevation

1/4



SM-433

Christmas Hill

St. Mary's County, Md.

E. Hughes

10/14

MD STP2

East bedroom mantel

2/4



SM-453

Christmas Hill

of Manly County, ME

E. Hughes

12/14

IND SHPO

Lower burn

7/4



SM- 453

Christmas Hill

St Mary's County

E. Hughes

10/94

MD intro

Tobacco barn - interior framing

4/4